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WEB SOIL SURVEY TO BE FEATURED AT NATIONAL CATTLEMEN'S BEEF ASSOCIATION CONVENTION IN SAN ANTONIO

Attendees Will Learn How to Utilize Free Program at NRCS Booth

Ranchers, land managers and others attending the National Cattlemen's Beef Association Convention and Trade Show in San Antonio on Jan. 27-30 will have the opportunity to receive a free hands-on demonstration on how to map the soils on their land using the Web Soil Survey (WSS) at the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) booth. Attendees can also learn about the technical and financial assistance programs available through NRCS to help them meet their land management goals.

Most all of the counties in Texas have been mapped and all soils have been identified and the data is available free of charge online on the Web Soil Survey at <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/> and the Soil Data Mart at <http://soildatamart.nrcs.usda.gov/>. A soil survey is a detailed report on the soils of an area. The soil survey has maps with soil boundaries and photos, descriptions, and tables of soil properties and features.

WSS can assist landowners in making decisions relative to farming and ranching operations, for example, differences in ecological sites and the plants capable of growing on that site, erosive soils, which soil sites will provide the greatest benefit from aerial spraying or other brush management practices.

"Interp maps provided through WSS can help the producer determine yield potentials when planting crops and implementing pasture and hayland plantings," said Kent Ferguson, NRCS state rangeland management specialist. "The WSS can help producers maintain profits, while reducing erosion, and improving soil and water quality."

WSS can also provide landowners and agricultural producers with aerial photos, topography maps, and measuring tools to help them manage their resources. Users also have the ability save and print information and maps, free of charge, day or night.

"We will have the capability at the booth to assist producers with WSS and the 'how-to's' of the program," said Ferguson. "The biggest link is the soils to the ecological site to the planning aspect of each producer's ranch."

Uses of the WSS include building sites, conservation plans, erosion control, farm and ranch appraisals, nutrient management, pipelines, range management, identification of risks and hazards, road building, water conservation, wetlands and wildlife management.

If you are unable to attend the trade show, but would like more information on how NRCS can help you meet your land management goals, technical and financial assistance programs, or Web Soil Survey, visit the NRCS Web site at www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov or contact NRCS at your local USDA Service Center, which is listed in phone directories under U.S. Government.

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